

The embodiments of the invention in which an exclusive property or privilege is claimed are defined as follows:

1. A method for electronically searching a user-personalized library of content, comprising:

- (a) receiving one or more search terms from a user having an electronically-searchable personalized library of content;
- (b) electronically searching the full text of the user's personalized library for pages of content that match the search terms to produce search results;
- (c) providing the search results to the user;
- (d) receiving a search result selection from the user; and
- (e) providing to the user an image of a page of content in the user's personalized library based on the user's search result selection.

2. The method of Claim 1, further comprising, prior to receiving one or more search terms from the user, establishing an electronically-searchable library of content that includes a page image database and a text searchable database, which library of content is personalized by the user to consist of content selected by the user.

3. The method of Claim 2, in which the library of content is personalized by manual selection of content by the user.

4. The method of Claim 2, in which the library of content is automatically personalized based on user selection of content for review or purchase.

5. The method of Claim 1, in which the user-personalized library of content is established at the time the user conducts the search.

6. The method of Claim 1, in which the user's personalized library of content is derived from a publicly-accessible general library of content.

7. The method of Claim 1, in which providing the search results to the user includes providing a list of content having pages with text that matches the search terms.

8. The method of Claim 7, further comprising ranking the content in the list of content according to a predetermined criterion.

9. The method of Claim 1, in which providing to the user an image of a page of content includes retrieving the page image from a database of page images stored in computer memory.

10. The method of Claim 1, in which the user's personalized library is defined after electronically searching a general library of content using the search terms, the user's personalized library being fully contained within the general library of content and defining the scope of search results provided to the user.

11. The method of Claim 1, further comprising:

(a) providing location information to the user that identifies the location of the search terms in the page image; and

(b) instructing an electronic application of highlight to the page image by the user in accordance with the location information to highlight the search terms in the page image.

12. The method of Claim 11, in which the electronic application of highlight to the page image comprises application of a layer of color on or near the search terms.

13. The method of Claim 11, in which the electronic application of highlight to the page image comprises placement of a visual indicator next to the search terms.

14. The method of Claim 1, further comprising using one or more access rules to limit an amount of content in one or more page images provided to the user.

15. The method of Claim 14, in which the access rules define an aggregate amount of content that can be provided to the user over a time frame.

16. The method of Claim 14, in which the access rules define a percentage of content that can be provided to the user over a time frame.

17. The method of Claim 14, in which the access rules define the amount of content that can be provided to the user based on content-specific information.

18. The method of Claim 14, in which the access rules define the amount of content that can be provided to the user based on user ownership of the content.

19. The method of Claim 18, further comprising reviewing purchase records to validate user ownership of the content.

20. The method of Claim 14, in which different access rules apply based on the location of the user.

21. The method of Claim 14, in which different access rules apply based on the time the content is to be provided to the user.

22. The method of Claim 14, in which the access rules define the amount of content that can be provided to the user based on an identification of the user.

23. The method of Claim 1, in which a non-text object in the user's personalized library is made searchable by including text data related to the object in the electronic search.

24. A method for preparing a user-personalized library of content for electronic searching, comprising:

(a) acquiring a general library of content that includes images and corresponding text of pages of content;

(b) preparing a page image database comprised of the images of pages of content;

(c) preparing a text searchable database comprised of the corresponding text of pages of content; and

(d) receiving from a user a selection of content in the general library to form a user-personalized library of content that the user can electronically search using the text searchable database.

25. The method of Claim 24, further comprising defining classes of content and assigning content in the user's personalized library to one or more of the classes.

26. The method of Claim 25, further comprising limiting a search of the user's personalized library to content in a specified class.

27. The method of Claim 24, in which the personalized library of content is comprised of content selected by a group of persons constituting a user, the method further comprising enabling persons in the group to conduct searches of the personalized library of content.

28. The method of Claim 24, in which the user's selection of content in the general library is received based on manual selection by the user.

29. The method of Claim 24, in which the user's selection of content in the general library is automatically received based on a selection of content by the user for review or purchase.

30. The method of Claim 24, further comprising storing the user-personalized library of content in a memory for later retrieval by the user.

31. The method of Claim 30, further comprising enabling the user to store and retrieve multiple user-personalized libraries.

32. The method of Claim 24, in which the user's selection of content in the general library is aided by providing the user with a list of content determined to be related to a subject content.

33. A computer system that provides electronic searching of a user-personalized library of content, comprising a search server in communication with a database server, in which the database server is configured with a general library of content that is accessible to multiple users, the general library including (1) a page image database containing images of pages of content and (2) a text searchable database containing text and identifying information indicating the page images in the page image database that contain the text, the search server being configured with a search engine comprised of computer-implemented instructions that enable the search server to receive one or more search terms from a user having established a personalized library within the general library of content, search the full text of the user's personalized library for pages

of content that match the search terms, provide the results of the full text search to the user for selection by the user, and provide to the user a page image from the page image database based on the user's search result selection.

34. The computer system of Claim 33, further comprising an access rights database in the database server with access rules that limit the amount of content in the page image that is provided to the user.

35. The computer system of Claim 34, in which the access rules define an aggregate amount of content that can be provided to the user over a time frame.

36. The method of Claim 34, in which the access rules define a percentage of content that can be provided to the user over a time frame.

37. The method of Claim 34, in which the access rules define the amount of content that can be provided to the user based on content-specific information.

38. The computer system of Claim 34, in which the access rules define the amount of content that can be provided to the user based on user ownership of the content.

39. The computer system of Claim 38, in which the computer-implemented instructions further enable the search server to validate user ownership of the content by reviewing purchase records pertaining to the user.

40. The computer system of Claim 34, in which different access rules apply based on the location of the user.

41. The computer system of Claim 34, in which different access rules apply based on the time the content is to be provided to the user.

42. The computer system of Claim 34, in which the access rules define the amount of content that can be provided to the user based on an identification of the user.

43. The computer system of Claim 33, in which a non-text object in the user's personalized library is made searchable by including text data related to the object in the text searchable database.

44. The computer system of Claim 33, in which the search server provides the search results in the form of a list of content having pages with text that matches the search terms, which content in the list of content is ranked according to a predetermined criterion.

45. The computer system of Claim 33, in which the computer-implemented instructions further enable the search server to provide location information to the user that identifies the location of search terms in the page image and instruct an electronic application of highlight to the page image by the user in accordance with the location information to highlight the search terms in the page image.

46. The computer system of Claim 45, in which the electronic application of highlight to the page image comprises application of a layer of color on or near the search terms.

47. The computer system of Claim 45, in which the electronic application of highlight to the page image comprises placement of a visual indicator next to the search terms.